

U.S. EMBASSY SKOPJE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Program Office:	Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Skopje
Award Type:	Grant or Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Title:	Annual Program Statement
Funding Opportunity Number:	SMK800-17-PAS-001
Areas of Award:	Entrepreneurship and innovation; countering violent extremism; and cultural diversity and empowering underserved communities
Deadline for Applications:	July 14, 2017 (11:59pm)
CFDA Number:	19.040 - Public Diplomacy Programs
Award Ceiling:	\$20,000
Award Floor:	\$1,000

CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact +389 2 310-2121 or SkopjeGrants@state.gov.

A. Program Description

The U.S. Embassy Skopje Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce that funding is available through the Embassy's public diplomacy grants program for projects that increase mutual understanding between the U.S. and Macedonia and promote the bilateral relationship. Topic areas eligible for funding include entrepreneurship and innovation; countering violent extremism; and cultural diversity and empowering underserved communities.

Activities that are typically funded include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Youth engagement, leadership, and education programs, including initiatives that establish exchanges between the youth of Macedonia and the United States
- Bringing an American expert speaker or performer to Macedonia
- Conferences, workshops, forums, panel discussions, and master classes on American themes or issues of mutual interest
- Exhibitions of works by Americans or on American themes
- Cultural programs, particularly those that target youth and underserved communities
- Television and social media programming in support of the above objectives

Activities that *are not* typically funded include, but are not limited to:

- Printing or promotion of books or manuscripts
- Travel to the United States for professional development
- Ongoing salary costs
- Office equipment
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds
- Promotion of the local arts scene
- Projects that are inherently political in nature or that contain the appearance of partisanship/support to individual or single-party electoral campaigns

- Political party activities
- Fundraising campaigns
- Commercial or trade activities
- Citizen exchange programs
- Social welfare projects
- Projects that support religious activities

B. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type

Cooperative Agreement or Grant. Cooperative agreements differ from grants in that Public Affairs staff are more actively involved in proposal execution and anticipate having moderate to substantial involvement once the award has been made.

Award Amounts

The total amount available is expected to be up to \$60,000. Most awards are expected to be between \$5,000 and \$7,000, with a maximum of \$20,000. The U.S. Embassy reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as it may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Project and Budget Periods

Projects generally must be completed in one year or less. The Public Affairs Section will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the applicants, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

C. Eligibility Information

The U.S. Embassy encourages applications from local non-governmental organizations. U.S. NGOs may apply, but preference is given to partnerships that develop the capacity of NGOs in Macedonia and include plans to transfer programs to sustainable local management.

D. Application and Submission Information

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

1. The Application Package forms are available at
<http://www.grants.gov/custom/viewOppDetails.jsp?oppId=291011>.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please ensure the following:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.
- All documents are in English.
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars.
- All pages are numbered.

- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

When submitting a proposal, applicants are required to include the following documents and information, as applicable:

Section 1– Organization Information

A copy of the organization’s registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter.

Section 2 – Technical Proposal

Proposal: *Applicants must submit a complete proposal according to the template provided.*

The proposal must not exceed 10 pages. All proposals should address the following areas:

- Executive Summary (no more than 2 paragraphs)
- Organizational Description and Capacity
- Project Justification/Needs Statement
- Project Goals, Objectives and Activities
- Implementation Timeline
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- Strengths and Innovation
- Sustainability

Section 3 – Budget

Budget and Budget Detail: Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification. Line item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. Personnel salaries should define the percentage of time each position will allocate to the project and the rate of pay. **Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars** and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

Section 4 – Key Personnel and Project Partners

Key Personnel – A résumé, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff persons, such as the Project Director and Finance Officer, as well as any speakers or trainers (if applicable). If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a résumé.

Project Partners – List the sub-awardees or other partners and identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership.

Section 5 – SF-424

Standard Forms 424 - Application for Federal Assistance and 424B - Assurances for Non-construction Programs (2 separate forms) are available, along with guidance for completing them, at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html> under the heading “SF-424 Family.”

Please note:

Other items **NOT** required/requested for submission, but which *may* be requested if your application is approved for funding include:

- a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
- b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
- c. Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas.

Public Affairs reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet and NCAGE code. Organizations requesting \$25,000 or more, or who have received a previous grant, must also have a valid registration on www.SAM.gov and NCAGE.

4. Submission Dates and Times

The Embassy will accept proposals on a rolling basis throughout the year, until July 14, 2017, and will review proposals, subject to the availability of funds, on a quarterly basis:

- February 1
- May 1
- August 1

Public Affairs will notify you upon receiving your application. Proposals (in English only) will not be considered until all information is received. Questions should be addressed to SkopjeGrants@state.gov.

E. Application Review Information**Criteria**

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the following evaluation criteria. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Project Idea** – The project idea is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal demonstrates originality and outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.
- **Project Justification and Support of U.S. Public Diplomacy Priorities** – The project is likely to provide maximum impact in furthering the broader U.S. Public Diplomacy policy objectives. The project addresses one or more of the priority program objectives,

target audiences, and geographic areas identified in the solicitation. The proposal contains a compelling justification, demonstrating an in-depth understanding of the environment in Macedonia and citing specific factors creating/influencing the need for the proposed project.

- **Organization's Record and Capacity** – The organization has expertise in the subject area and demonstrates the ability to perform the proposed activities. The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations. Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate.
- **Cost-Effectiveness** – The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** – Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward Public Affairs Section goals. Projects should demonstrate the capacity for engaging in outcome-based evaluations and identify proscribed outputs and outcomes to measure how program activities will achieve the program's strategic objectives. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan should include output- and outcome-based indicators, baseline and target for each indicator, disaggregation if applicable, monitoring and evaluation tools, data source, and frequency of monitoring and evaluation.
- **Sustainability** - Proposals clearly delineate how elements of their program will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect may include, but is not limited to, plans to build lasting networks for direct and indirect beneficiaries, follow-on training and mentoring, and continued use of project deliverables. A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating capacity-building results, a plan to generate revenue, or interest and support from the private sector.

Review and Selection Process

Each technically eligible application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated by a panel on the basis of the criteria detailed above and below. Proposals will be approved based on an evaluation of how the proposal meets the solicitation review criteria, U.S. foreign policy objectives, the priority needs of the Public Affairs Section, and availability of funding. Additional preferences include the following:

- Programs with strong U.S. content and connection to American culture and values
- Institutions with a proven track record of executing outstanding projects
- Programs that create new ties between U.S. and Macedonia peer institutions or between citizens of Macedonia and the United States or that present American culture and society in an innovative manner
- Programs that promote diversity and acceptance of minority groups, including persons with disabilities and the LGBTI community

- Programs that target young audiences, particularly high school and university students and young professionals
- Programs that target geographically and demographically diverse audiences within Macedonia
- Programs with a strong social media component
- Programs that involve American Corners in Macedonia. More information about American Corners and their locations can be found here:
<https://macedonia.usembassy.gov/american-corners-macedonia2.html>

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

The successful applicant will be notified via email that its proposal has been selected to move forward in the review process; this email IS NOT an authorization to begin performance. The notice of Federal award signed by the grants officer (or equivalent) is the authorizing document. It shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the Government Official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through email transmission. The recipient may only incur obligations against the award beginning on the start date outlined in the DS-1909 award document that has been signed by the Grants Officer. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified via email, usually within 30 days.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

Terms and Conditions

Recipients will be held to the applicable terms and conditions found at <https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/Pages/TermsandConditions.aspx>.

It is the Recipient's responsibility to ensure they are in compliance with all applicable terms, conditions, and OMB guidance and requirements. Those organizations found to be in noncompliance may be found ineligible for funding or designated high risk.

2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit

Requirements for Federal Awards: All applicants must adhere to the regulations found in 2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Branding Requirements

As a condition of receipt of a grant award, all materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement,

including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, backdrops, and podium signs must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. **Note:** Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

Evaluation

In line with the Department of State's Evaluation Policy, the U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section may include this award in its program evaluation efforts. When applicable and feasible, the Recipient shall cooperate with the Grants Officer (GO) and Grants Officer Representative (GOR) requests to contribute data on specific performance measures and indicators; consider GO and GOR input on design and methodology of recipient-led evaluation efforts; provide any evaluation reports produced under the award to the GO and GOR for review; incorporate the project into any third-party evaluations that Public Affairs may initiate.

Reporting Requirements

Recipients are required to submit quarterly (calendar year) program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 60 days after the close of the project period.

First Quarter (January 1 – March 31): Report due by April 30

Second Quarter (April 1 – June 30): Report due by July 31

Third Quarter (July 1 – September 30): Report due by October 31

Fourth Quarter (October 1 – December 31): Report due by January 31

All reports are to be submitted electronically. Deviations from this timeline will be considered depending on the timing of the grant's funding allocation. Awardees that are deemed to be high risk may be required to submit more extensive and frequent reports until their high risk designation has been removed.

The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government-provided equipment using the SF428 form.

Failure to comply with the reporting requirement may result in a loss of funds and will adversely affect your ability to apply for future grants.

G. Contact Information

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact SkopjeGrants@state.gov.

H. Other Information

Disclaimers

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the

preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling. If a proposal is funded, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State. This NOFO is subject to funds availability. Awards may be granted only if appropriated funds are allocated to the United States Embassy by Department of State central budget authorities. The Embassy recommends you review U.S. Department of State security guidance available on <http://travel.state.gov>.

Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.